

With record setting gas prices of over \$4.50 a gallon here in California, record setting crude oil prices reaching more than \$140 a barrel, residential electricity prices in California up more than 31% since 2000, and natural gas prices up more than 75% since 2002, I believe that Congress needs to take swift action to enact comprehensive relief from high energy prices by ensuring we have access to reliable and affordable energy to meet our needs. The impact of the high cost of energy, if not gas alone, reverberates throughout the economy resulting in increased prices we pay for nearly every product purchased and service we use.

I support a comprehensive solution to address our energy problems because we must embrace and consider all solutions that can help provide short-term relief and long-term stability. I support developing our domestic oil and natural gas resources in order to make our country more energy independent today and to increase supplies that could reduce costs to us consumers. I also support incentives that can pave the way to alternative fuels so we can diversify our energy supplies and invest in American-made energy, help create jobs, and grow the economy. But I do not believe in the fiction that we can only do one or the other; we must do both to address prices today and ensure reliable and affordable prices for our children's generation.

To that end, I have cosponsored 10 bills that, when taken as a whole, I believe are a good first step to creating a comprehensive energy policy that allows access to American energy resources, promotes motor vehicle efficiency, expands America's refining capacity, and continues to encourage the development of alternative and renewable energy technologies and resources.

First, it is imperative to decrease our dependence on foreign crude oil, as well as other foreign energy resources, so the price Americans pay for energy is not subject to OPEC oil supply manipulations in the world market. That is why I have cosponsored legislation (H.R. 6138, H.R. 6107, H.R. 6108, and H.R. 2784) that would allow development of American oil, natural gas, and oil shale resources in an environmentally respectfully way. By allowing development of these resources, we can reduce our dependence on foreign oil, stabilize if not lower our energy costs, and create thousands of well-paid jobs in the energy sector.

Second, I believe that conservation and increased energy efficiency is going to play a vital role in helping to solve our current energy problem. To that end, I have cosponsored legislation (H.R. 2927) that would increase the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards, or how many miles per gallon a car or truck gets, for automobiles and SUVs to 32-35 miles per

gallon over a reasonable timeframe. This legislation is a step in the right direction that may help reduce our consumption of gasoline and increase energy efficiency in our automobiles in the future.

Third, Congress ought to encourage construction of new refineries to alleviate gas price shocks when an existing refinery goes off-line for maintenance or as a result of a natural disaster. In fact, in 2006, about 17% of all refined petroleum products, including gas, sold in the U.S. were imported. Therefore, with existing U.S. refining surplus capacity extremely narrow or nonexistent in some instances, to avoid becoming more dependent on imported refined products and to avoid price spikes, new refining capacity needs to be constructed. I have cosponsored H.R. 2279, a bill that would allow the President to designate at least three closed military facilities for new refineries, provided the Governor of the state where the proposed refinery would be located does not object.

Fourth, we need to continue to encourage and invest in alternative and renewable energy technologies, including wind, solar, geothermal, and nuclear energy, to diversify energy resources. Wind, solar, and geothermal resources currently provide nearly limitless emission-free, clean, sustainable energy, and I believe that its overall national market share of electricity production (currently about 3%) can continue to grow. That is why I have cosponsored several bills (H.R. 5984, H.R. 6133, H.R. 197, and H.R. 1924) that would extend, modify, and enlarge various tax incentives for renewable and alternative energies, which includes the production tax credit for electricity produced from wind and geothermal resources and the investment tax credit to purchase and install solar technologies on residential and commercial structures. I am also working on legislation that would modify the credit so that there is long-term certainty.

Finally, I support environmental regulatory reform that does not reduce protections for our environment, which I believe is important to preserve for future generations to enjoy, but makes government work better and more efficiently. Bureaucratic, duplicative, and convoluted permitting procedures ought to be simplified and streamlined, removing costly and time consuming barriers to developing our energy resources and infrastructure. These costs ultimately are passed on to the consumer, either directly or indirectly through delayed action in developing vital energy infrastructure to help meet our energy needs.

However, with current energy prices, the last thing Congress ought to be considering is raising taxes, a bad policy that we would ultimately end up paying for because this would not reduce gas prices at the pump, and likely make us more energy dependent on foreign resources. Increasing taxes could lead to more conventional energy production moving

overseas, thereby reducing domestic supplies and further subjecting Americans to the whims of the OPEC oil cartel.

I will continue to fight in Congress for a comprehensive, commonsense energy policy as this debate continues, as well as work to enact the previously mentioned bills I have cosponsored, which would be a good first step to helping ensure we have a reliable and affordable energy supply.